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DHS FOR TSA - ROBERT BAKER

SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PTER](#) [EAIR](#) [TU](#)
SUBJECT: Update on Civair Security

Ref: (A) State 348468 (B) State 348269
(C) Ankara 7597

Summary:

1. (SBU) Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) officials told us that they had not yet examined TSA's emergency amendments which could require armed law enforcement officers to be posted on certain flights, and pointed out the risks of posting such officers without adequate training. They advised that they would consult with their counterparts at the Turkish National Police as to what actions Turkey would take in this area. They also provided information on cargo carriers and said they supported a return to instituting border and customs controls at the first port of entry. End Summary.

2. (SBU) Econoff and Econ Specialist met with Topa Toker, head of the Directorate General for Civil Aviation (DGCA) and other DGCA officials on December 31 to discuss aviation security issues, including the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's (DHS') recent emergency aviation amendments, new procedures for all-cargo carriers and a gap in immigration and customs controls at Turkish airports.

Reaction to DHS Aviation Emergency Amendments

3. (SBU) On December 29, the Embassy faxed to DGCA a copy of DHS' December 28 amendments (ref A) which would require carriers to provide an armed government law enforcement officer on flights specified by the U.S. Transportation Security Administration (TSA), or to cancel the flight if no such officer could be deployed. Toker and his staff had not examined the amendment prior to the meeting, but said he would review this carefully, discuss it with the Turkish National Police (TNP) and advise us as to what actions Turkey would take. Oktay Erdagi, DGCA's Head of Department for Security, pointed out the risks of introducing weapons to aircraft, particularly if the law enforcement officers posted did not have specialized training. He said TNP planned to train officers to serve as air marshals, but the police were still in the process of selecting officers for the training. However, he said that, in an emergency, Turkish authorities could put a law enforcement officer on board an aircraft if required by TSA.

4. (SBU) Erdagi said that Turkish Airlines (THY) had taken extra security measures on international flights, including deployment of an extra unarmed steward to help protect access to the pilots' cabin and strengthening cockpit doors.

All-Cargo Security Procedures

5. (SBU) Econoff noted that TSA had recently issued All-Cargo International Security Procedures and advance vetting requirements for crewmembers (ref B), and was attempting to inform all cargo airlines directly. Econoff asked for a list of all-cargo carriers with routes to or from the United States or overflying U.S. territory. Topa Toker responded that THY is the only

cargo carrier with direct flights to the U.S., with cargo taken on its passenger flights. MNG, a private carrier, runs cargo flights, but not directly to the United States from Turkey. Oktay Erdagi said he would pass on information from U.S. authorities to the relevant carriers.

Gap in Immigration/Customs Control

16. (SBU) Econoff raised an apparent loophole which could allow international passengers to avoid passing through border and customs controls in some airports (ref C). In Ankara, airline staff direct international arrivals connecting through Istanbul to a bus taking them to a terminal with border and customs controls, and domestic passengers to another terminal without those controls. However, staff do not always check to ensure that arriving passengers board the correct bus.

17. (SBU) Toker acknowledged that the existing system could be strengthened by adding staff to check boarding cards at the plane and at the entry to the domestic terminal. However, he and the TNP would prefer to rectify the problem by requiring passengers to clear customs and border control at the initial point of entry to Turkey. Toker said he would recommend this at a January meeting of the National Civil Aviation Security Board.

Chainsaw on a Domestic Flight

18. (U) Econoff also raised press reports that a passenger on the December 20 Istanbul - Bodrum flight had taken a chainsaw on board the aircraft. Toker said that the press had exaggerated the story and that the incident had not been a safety risk. The passenger had brought a chainsaw motor (without the chain) and its empty fuel tank on board. Because the tank had been emptied just before the flight, other passengers had smelled gasoline and this prompted the media's interest. Erdagi acknowledged that it would be worthwhile for DGCA to review procedures for screening for potentially hazardous materials.

Edelman